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SCIENCE HAS A RENDEZVOUS

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Somewhere in our childhood came our first thrill in hearing the ancient story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves." Through juvenile curiosity we marveled at the power of the "Open Sesame," and were charmed by the story of Aladdin and his magic lamp. How we longed to be the boy who had but to rub a crude old vessel to bring before him a servant, ready and able to do Aladdin's bidding. How extraordinary it all was! And, yet, no magic in all the "Arabian Nights," in all the transformations of the fairy wand and the mystic spell is half so marvelous as the accomplishments of Modern Science. Like these stories that came to us from the poetic dreams of the Arab, Science itself was once a dream. The hoary witch-doctor of savage tribes roamed forest and plain in useless search for a panacea. The visionary alchemist of mediaeval [sic] ages labored unceasingly for centuries in a futile effort to secure the "philosopher's stone" through which he might transform base metals into gold. We of today, practical, systematic, erudite, and desirous of quicker results, ridicule the dreamer of the dark past; but the Oriental understood this visionary, for he said, "God gave man dreams by night that he might learn to dream by day." a priceless blessing to humanity are these sages of long ago,--true pioneers, precursors of a coming scientific age.

Modern Science, though still inspired by dreams, is realistic and methodical. Its vast province embraces the great forces of Nature. "It is the world's mightiest resource, both of peace and of war." Science turns space into a carrier of voice, the atmosphere into a thorough fare for ships, the cataract into a thousand factories, the weeds and vines of the jungle into garden fruits and flowers, the stones of the earth into bread.

From the storehouses of Nature beneath these rolling hills, scientists have brought forth myriad things, delightful to the eye and pleasing to the taste. The keen flash of energy illuminating the heavens in a summer storm, they have enslaved in the machines of industry. Modern Science, in unfolding the secrets of Nature, of life and health, of happiness and prosperity, has realized the illusive hopes of the alchemist, and the dreams that were man's by night have become gold in the sun of today's civilization.

The progress of the world has always been animated by some ideal. Our story is one of human sentiments. Rome found her preeminent aim in conquest; the Reformation had its impetus in man's desire for personal freedom and righteous liberty; the Revolution grew out of our forefathers' resentment of tyranny; the torches of the World War were fired by the militaristic ambition of William of Germany. Apprehending the utter futility of war, nations today plan for universal peace. With all-absorbing interest, we study the development of the League of Nations and are moved by the plea for a World Court of international justice. Let peace come, let "swords be beaten into plowshares," yet there will remain a greater battle to be fought; a world-wide battle which began in the remote past and has increased in complexity and severity down through the ages; a contest confronting humanity with peculiar weapons and stealthy enemies. We know not when a treacherous foe will cross our threshold and enervate or even steal away the life of a loved one. No soothsayer can foretell when an adversary will muster a force and smite a while nation. The enemies engaged in this tremendous conflict are disease and human suffering. While the casualties of martial combat are numbered in thousands, losses from these foes must be reckoned in millions. Whereas wars produce but a momentary rift in humanity, disease and suffering have alienated peoples since prehistoric man wrote in clay and stone the annals of his tribe. My friends, so long as infirmities men, so long as disease isolates one community from another, we cannot

Hope for universal peace, international justice, or a common understanding among nations.

Until India and China, burdened with disease and infirmity, are relieved, their populace will continue pusillanimous and oppressed. Grant India health, and she will cast off the exploiting yoke of England; give China, with her myriad millions, health and culture, and she will astonish the world with progress. The healing sciences of modern civilization alone can restore the ancient glory of Asia

But there are even graver conditions in the tropics. Tropical ailments have robbed our southern neighbors of their vitality, making them the century-old victims of exploitation by the dominant people of temperate regions. But punishment awaits the ruthless exploiters; sooner or later they themselves must sink to the physical level of the natives' abuse. Let momentous shame fall upon civilized nations for their attitude toward their tropical subjects! Those simple bronzed folk of the jungle are human beings, not beasts. Truly, we need the tropics. There luxuriates the exuberant gardens of the world; there lie possibilities for the building of nations, yet undreamed of; there wait golden opportunity for service to suffering humanity.

But need we journey beyond our own shores to discover human influenza, malaria, leprosy, Bright's disease, venereal disease, epilepsy, insanity, feeble-mindedness and mal-nutrition in our own United States is worse than appalling. "What a host of wounded in this destructive war of peace!" Men, women, and children live in poignant suffering longing for the angel of death, their usefulness impaired, their earthly tomorrow sunless.

To whom I ask, may we intrust the generalship of this battle against disease and human suffering? Who has always marshalled the forces of vigorous manhood? You reply, "the Scientist." That is the verdict of all courts.

"The future belongs to science. More and more it con-

trols the destinies of nations." Already it has them under its lens, within its crucible, and on its scales of balance. In its glorious mission science preaches an unusual gospel- the gospel of service. No selfish motive incites the sacrificial efforts of the biologist, the chemist, the medical scientist. As dear to suffering humanity are these apostles of service as were Paul and Silas to the Church of Corinth. What an Eden might earth be should we but welcome that faith, joining scientists upon those problems whose solutions would lead the afflicted out of sorrow into the sunshine of health and happiness!

Pasteur enthusiastically devoted his life to the sciences of chemistry and medicine. We can never repay him for his application of the germ theory to the prevention and cure of the infectious diseases. No one can estimate the value of the discoveries by Walter Reed and Doctor Carroll in the causes and natures of typhoid and yellow fevers. Doctor Carroll willingly risked his life to gain knowledge of that most destructive malady of the South. " Greater love hath no man."

Immensely are we indebted to experimentalists with anesthetics and the X-ray. Many of these noble workers suffered pain and disfigurement, some even paying the supreme sacrifice. We can safely say that somewhere this evening, be it in a research laboratory, in a jungle beneath the equatorial sky, or in a secluded village of the Orient, some scientist suffers for mankind. Venturesome would it be of me to attempt to pay a fitting tribute to an army of scientists of the past and present whose services to humanity are as unlimited as posterity itself.

Indeed, the highest motive of science lies in its service to the suffering; but such is not its sole mission. With each succeeding decade we are confronted with the growing significance of the theory of Malthus. How many people can America support? How many, the world? The question of our future food supply presses heavily upon us. Our country is faced with overpopulation; its eastern section has become industrialism must necessarily expand. Our virgin territory

faded with the frontier. Europe and the East suffer under the burden of intense population. The deserts and swamps of Asia, Africa, Australia, and America are non-productive. The Russian plains yield little food for export. Disease hinders the introduction of modern agriculture into the tropics. Even cultivated lands suffer from overpopulation and the natural enemies hazard the crops and animals of the farmer. But science stands ready to defend us. Presently we may see the desert reclaimed and the swamp relieved of its stagnation. Where now the cactus blooms, our posterity will harvest. The lair of the crocodile will become a garden. Vigorous plants developed by Burbanks of tomorrow will transform cold, treeless plains into beautiful homesteads. Trade winds will kiss the shores of agriculture's ideal lands. Farming through scientific improvement and application will become an alluring and lucrative vocation.

Our age, we hail, as one of industrialism. The future will be increasingly industrial. As population enlarges and civilization advances, demand naturally gains on production. Efficiency is manufacturing demands constant improvement. Waste must needs be converted into utilities. Materials now lying useless must be studied and transformed into commodities; but industry, itself a creation of science, triumphantly welcomes the research specialist. Call after call summons the biologist, the chemist, and the physicist, for they are able to shape the ends of production.

Certainly the relation of science to knowledge should be one of common interest. Science is the apostle of truth. All about us we behold natural phenomena, and these we understand through the light of science. Life is no longer a mystery, but an interpretation. Our bodies, we learn, are but physical and chemical machines, and our obedience to the simple laws of Nature. The age of the earth, and of the universe, is revealed through the story related by the elements themselves. The beginning of things, the history of things, and the future as we may anticipate it

cease to be secrets.

How strange that there should be such a general indifference toward science and scientists. We eulogize the writer, the statesman, the warrior, and enshrine their memories; but the greatest scientist is known to but few. High school students think that elementary studies in biology, chemistry, and physics are merely nuisances they must endure for their diploma. College students regard the sciences as necessary evils in the curriculum. Literature, fine arts, language, history, all command the widest attention of scholars, while in the laboratory a little group of earnest scientists served mankind and taught us our true obligation! A supreme opportunity presents itself to humanity. Shall we join with Science to still the cries of the afflicted and establish universal welfare? Will not our valiant youth accept the challenge of scientific leadership and service?

Among the fearless young men who doffed their cap and gown for khaki uniform and went to fight in France was a young poet, Alan Seeger. You remember the message he left us; it was the voice of an undaunted soldier who stood out against the sky to keep his rendezvous with Death.

"I have a rendezvous with Death
At some disputed barricade.
When Spring comes back with rustling shade,
And apple blossoms fill the air-
I have a rendezvous with Death,
When Spring brings back blue days and fair."

The war that inspired this noble youth is finished, we trust; but the struggle to which Science calls us continues. Hearing the call, shall we stand mute or enlist as cohorts of Science and keep our rendezvous with Life?

For we've a rendezvous with Life
In field, in home, in busy mart.
To us is thrown the sword for strife,
And we must play a soldier's part.
It may not be on "battered hill".
"At some disputed barricade,"-
But we shall keep our tryst, and still,
With calm clear eyes, and unafraid,
To our "pledged word" be ever true,
We "shall not fail that rendezvous."